VIA LACTEA

OR

THE

SAINTS

Onely [illegible] to

True Blessedness,

Opened in a *SERMON* from MATTH. 5. 8.

ALSO,

The Danger of neglecting *Gospel-Salvation*, from *Heb* 2. 3.

By *Thomas Cheesman*, Master of Arts, *and formerly a Member of* Pembrook-Colledge *in* Oxford.

With his Epistle to Vindicate Himself from those Absurdities of Method and Language, and [illegible] left [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] by a Mercenary Pen, [illegible]

[illegible] Printed for the Vindi[illegible] and Satisfaction of the Reader.

BODLEIANA BIBLIOTHECA

TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader,

MY poor Labour in the Gospel have been of late so wretchedly abused, and falsely represented to the World, as that I have been in a manner constrained to Print these following Sermons, for a necessary vindication of my Ministry, from the contempt of those prophane adversaries, who would gladly lay hold upon any occasion to vilifie it, and load it with disgraceful imputations. In particular, that Sermon upon Mat. 5. 8. Has been most barbarously handled, and contumeliously dealt with, for I dare appeal to any judicious auditor, which was present at the delivery of it, whither the counterfeit Copy can shew almost any thing true and genuine, save onely the Text; that absurd Pamphlet, in which these unparalled forgeries are comprized, carries a fair and plausible Title, flattering the Reader into expectations of some rich spiritual treasure, but he which would take the paines to search,

ſhall find his deluded hopes entertained with nothing but droſs and dung, the very excrements of a ſottiſh diſtempered brain; in a word, the diſcourſe is altogether wild, brutiſh, and extravagant, as if it were ambitious to derive its pedigree from a pure frenſie, and were calculated for Bedlam, *rather then any ſerious Chriſtian auditory, or were penned by an author who had publiquely renounced all congruity of language, and had profeſſed himſelf a ſworn Enemy both to reaſon and conſcience, before he could be qualified for the work; and therefore Chriſtian Reader, for the future, I deſire thee, either to receive or give credit to any thing that ſhall come abroad in the like nature as mine But I ſhall dwell no longer upon this unpleaſing ſubject, be it known for thy further ſatisfaction, that what is here Printed, is the ſame for the main ſubſtance of it, with that which was formerly Preached, without any conſiderable addition; concerning the whole, I ſhall venture to ſay thus much, that there is the clear water of life drawn from the wells of ſalvation, though not preſented to thee in a golden cup; wholeſome food, though the diſh be not artificially garniſhed; yet if thou be in the number of hungering and thirſting ſouls, ſuch as reliſh the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, thou wilt not ſtand upon niceneſs or delicacy. I Intreat that thou do not onely read, but weigh and conſider; never reſt ſatisfied until the truths here contained have made ſome lively impreſſion upon thy heart, ſo this and all other diſcourſes of the like nature may build thee up in thy moſt holy faith, and bring thee nearer to God, which ſhall be the Prayer of him who would gladly approve himſelf a faithful Witneſs to the truth.*

Tho. Cheeſman.

MAT. 5. 8.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

HEre is a description of happiness quite contrary to the expectation of *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who being strangers to the spiritual interpretation of the Law, did commonly teach their Disciples, that they need not doubt of obtaining Salvation, if they did but lead civil lives: if they did but bring forth the fruits of moral honesty, and were exactly conformable to the Tradition of their Elders. But saya our Saviour, Do not satisfie your selves with such an empty shadow of outward Traditional, and Ceremonial holiness. Know, it is the inward frame and disposition of heart, which you are principally engaged to regard, and look after; *Blessed are the pure in heart, &c.* though there are many persons zealous in the observation of superstitious customes, which their own fancy hath made choice of, though they stand much upon clean Garments, and clean Vessels. Though they do much

for the purifying of the flesh, yet notwithstanding this their outward purity, they may be objects of Gods reprobating anger, they may be condemned to perish with the unbeleiving world, and fall short of eternal happiness; But *blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* By heart here is meant all the powers and faculties of the inward man; so purity of heart doth imply an understanding free from error, a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man, a will freed from the Dominion of sin and Satan, affections clarified and refined from the dross of this present World. *Blessed are they that are thus pure in heart, for they shall see God*; that is, they shall enjoy him.

2. Vision is commonly put for fruition in the Scripture; so in that place, *Heb.* 12. 14. *Follow Peace and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*; that is, none shall enjoy him; no man without holiness, shall be admitted to taste that fulness of joy, or bath in those Rivers of pleasures that are at the right hand of God; or else we may understand it according to the more plain and familiar signification, *and thus the pure in heart shall see God*, in his work of creation, they shall behold him in the beautiful frame of Heaven and earth; every thing which they see, will put them in mind of their creatours wisdom, goodness, and power; they shall see him likewise in the works of providence, taking notice of his hand in every mercy, and in every judgement; and they shall see him present in all his Ordinances; but more especially they shall see him in the life to come; they shall see the blessed person of Jesus Christ, who is the glass of the

Trinity, and in whom these who are pure in heart shall one day behold the fullness of the God-head dwelling bodily; this glass is of a transforming nature; for they which see it, shall be changed into the same likeness, from glory to glory. Thus much for the meaning of the words, the pure in heart shall see God, while they continue in this World, by an eye of faith; they shall likewise have a more clear immediate ravishing and refreshing vision of him, when they are perfectly glorified in the life to come.

The Text may be divided into a Proposition, and a Demonstration. The Proposition asserts that the pure in heart are blessed; The Demonstration or Argument which the Holy Ghost makes use of in this place, to prove their blessedness, is taken from their seeing of God; *blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

The principal Doctrine, resulting from the words, may be this,

That the pure in heart, they, and onely such as they, are blessed; or, *that true blessedness can never be obtained without purity of Heart.*

In the Prosecution of it, I shall first shew, what precious ingredients are required to make up this purity of heart. Secondly, why we should labour to get purity of heart. Thirdly, what means we should use to have our hearts purified. Fourthly, in what particulars this purity of heart will especially discover it self.

These are many things implyed or comprehended in this purity of heart. First, the justification of our persons; civilizing morality doth onely furnish men with some sweet scented flowers, which may perfume their outward conversation, rendring it more acceptable to humane society, though still their hearts may continue as filthy and impure as ever they were before. Moral men commonly have a high conceit of themselves, and yet they may be abominable in the sight of God, as *Solomon* speaks, Prov. 30. 12. *There is a Generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness*; but no true purity can be effectually produced in our inward parts, until we come to be sprinckled in the blood of Christ, *Rev.* 1. 5. *Who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood*. We can never be cleansed from our sinful abominations, until we be washed in the blood of that immaculate Lamb, which takes away the sins of the World; when the soul is brought into a state of justification, it is cloathed in the wedding Garment of Christs imputed righteousness, which is large enough to cover all its natural deformities, and then though it were never so black and filthy before, it presently appears full of amiable lustre, and shining excellency, bright, and clear, beautiful as an Angel, without spot or blemish in the sight of God.

Secondly, Purity of heart doth imply a renovation of our nature. We are all defiled in our very birth and conception; the poysonous Leprosie of Original sin hath spread it self over every faculty of the soul, and member of the body; therefore if ever we obtain any acceptable purity, this corrupt depraved

praved nature must be changed; hence is that Petition of the Prophet *David*, which you may read in *Psal.* 51. 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.* Tit. 3. 5. *we are said to be saved by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* And the Apostle *Paul* likewise prays in the behalf of his *Thessalonians*, that they may be sanctified throughout, both in body, soul, and spirit, 1 *Thes.* 5. 23. The soul and the spirit are here to be distinguished. The Spirit here signifies the most Noble sublime and Angelical part of man, comprehending his will, conscience and understanding; the soul, that signifies the inferiour faculties of sensitive desires and affections, and the body that is the outward man, the instrument of the soul. In *Ezek.* 36. 25, 26. you have an excellent Gospel promise, *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be washed from all your filthiness, and from all your Idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.* Oh that men were generally more convinced about the excellency and necessity of this sanctifying work!

Thirdly, purity of heart requires the casting out of defiling sins; all sin is of a very defiling nature, therefore its shadowed forth in the book of *Leviticus*, under the notion of a spreading Leprosie; 'tis compared likewise to the vomit of a Dog, and to that filthy mire which Swine delight to wallow in. But more particularly, sinful pleasures must be cast out of the heart. In the 47. of *Ezek.* there you read concerning the River of the Sanctuary, that is, the Doctrine of the Gospel, which is dispersed

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amidſt the wilderneſs of the Gentiles; and moſt places where it came, received a healing vertue from it, but in the 11 *verſ.* the Miry places, and the Mariſhes thereof ſhall not be healed. By the Mariſhes and Miry places, ſome fitly underſtand thoſe men & women that have given themſelves over to ſinful pleaſures; theſe kind of perſons are very unlikely to be healed by the waters of the Sanctuary; what groſs defilement do many contract, while they let looſe the raines to vile affections, and drown the maſculine activity of their ſpirit in a loathſome pudle of ſenſuality! Alſo earthly-mindedneſs is another ſin, which muſt be caſt out, if we deſire to have a pure heart. When a thing is mingled with that which is of a ſuperior nature, its thereby made more rich and precious, as when ſilver is mingled with gold; but if it be mingled with that which is of an inferiour nature, as ſilver mingled with lead, ſuch a hererogeneus mixture doth debaſe and impoveriſh it; thus when the ſoul of man is as I may ſo ſpeak, mingled with the graces of the ſpirit, this makes it more Noble, exalting it to a higher degree of perfection. But if it be mingled with the droſſy vanities of the world, this makes it baſe and vile. The Scripture tells us concerning the pollutions of the World, 2 *Epiſt.* of *Peter*, Cap. 2. verſ. 20. and in *James* 1. 27. ſaith he, *This is pure Religion and undefiled before God, and the father, to viſit the fatherleſs and the widows in their afflictions, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world*; of the things of the world, they are a dirty defiling nature; they are like Pitch, tis hard to touch them and not contract ſome defilement or other. How

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is it poſſible that that man ſhould have a pure heart that can be contented from morning to night, to entertain nothing but the world in his ſoul! *John* 17. 15. (ſaith Chriſt,) *I pray not that thou ſhouldeſt take them out of the world, but that thou ſhouldeſt keep them from the evil.*

Fourthly, Purity of heart requireth that we ſhould adorn our ſelves with purifying Graces; Firſt, Hope, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. *He that hath this hope, purifieth himſelf even as he is pure.* Raiſed expectations of future happineſs, ſhould ſtir up in the ſoul ſtrong and vigorous endeavours after preſent holineſs; becauſe a defiled heart, and a undefiled inheritance, cannot ſtand together. Secondly, Faith, thats another purifying grace; as you have it, *Act.* 15. 9. *Purifying their hearts by faith.* Thoſe which perſwade themſelves, that they doe believe in Chriſt; and yet their hearts are as carnal, and corrupt, as filthy, and impure as ever they were before, They may know that their faith is but a fantaſtick dream, or deluding ſhadow; there is nothing of truth, nothing of reality in it: Faith having tied a marriage knot between Chriſt and the ſoul, layes a ſtrong engagement upon her, to keep her ſelf chaſt and pure till the approach of her glorious Bridegroom, when ſhe ſhall be taken into the everlaſting embraces of his love. Thirdly, Repentance, that is another purifying grace: Repentance pulls off the maſk from the face of ſin, cauſing it to appear in its proper colours; ſo that it hath no alluring paint nor counterfeit dreſs, by which it ſhould ennare, or delude the ſoul any longer. Repentance fills the ſoul of a ſinner with hatred and deteſtation againſt ſin; making

king him restless in his desire, till he can procure an universal divorce, and perpetual separation from it. Those that continue impenitent, can lye soaking in the mire of bloody, raigning lust, and yet not be sensible of the least defilement; but the truly penitent soul is solicitous to wash out every spot and stain. Fourthly, Love that has a notable purifying influence upon the heart; Love chiefly stands in a reciprocal similitude of disposition. They that love God, will strive every day to have more and more of his likeness, of his picture they are ambitious to be beautified with the most plentiful participation of his image. They that love God, will endeavour for such a measure of holiness and purity as may dispose and fit them to maintain a refreshing fellowship and communion with God. You that can wallow in the sink of common profaness, without the least check or remorse of conscience, Oh! it is a sign you have not the least dram of true love to God. Fiftly, Purity of heart requireth that we should be consecrated, devoted and given up to the service of God. Men of drossy impure spirits look after carnal self in whatsoever they doe; they aim at nothing but the pleasing and gratifying of their flesh; thats the great end which they propose to themselves in all their actions; but those who have a pure heart endeavour to glorifye God by yeilding impartial obedience to his Commands. They act according to the simplicity of the Gospel; walking in the plainess, candor and ingenuity of a gracious spirit. Pharisaical Hypocrites, how ever they may cleanse the outside, yet their hearts are rotten and impure; because they onely serve God for by-ends and self respects.

ſpects. Sixthly, purity of heart requireth that we ſhould reſiſt vain thoughts, *Jerem.* 4. 14. *Oh Jeruſalem, waſh thy heart from wickedneſs, that thou mayſt be ſaved*; what wickedneſs was this which muſt be waſhed away, leſt it did hinder ſalvation? the holy Ghoſt tells you in the following words, *how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee!* Thoſe which indulge themſelves in the harbouring of vain thoughts, muſt never look to have their hearts cleanſed; therefore when ever thoughts begin to riſe in thy ſoul, command them to ſtand and undergo a ſerious examination; if they can ſhew a paſs from the Scripture, let them go on, and be encouraged, but if they appear to be vain, idle, and impertinent, ſend them back to hell from whence they came, not giving them the leaſt countenance or approbation.

In the laſt place purity of heart requires that we ſhould bridle immoderate affections. You know, water though it be never ſo freſh and pure, while it runs in its proper Channel, yet if it overflow the banks, it will quickly grow muddy and defiled; thus the affections if they be kept within due bounds, and proper limits, they may be pure; but when once they overflow the banks of ſobriety and moderation, they preſently are defiled. Take heed therefore leſt thy ſpirit be defiled by the irregular diſtempers and corrupt exceſſes of joy, anger, carnal love, or of any the like tranſporting violent paſſions.

In the next place I proceed to ſhew why we ſhould labour after this purity.

1. Becauſe without this we cannot hear the word ſo as to profit by it; If the ſtomach be filled with corrupt matter, the moſt wholeſome food will

prove distastful; thus when the heart abounds with impurity, the most spiritual and heavenly truths that can be delivered, will scarce find any acceptable or savoury relish; those which cannot feed upon the word with such sweetness, delight & satisfaction, if they would seriously examine themselves, they may possibly find that they have defiled their consciences by some secret way of sinning against God, and thats the reason why their hearts are so little affected under the Preaching of those Gospel truths, which were formerly entertained with highest esteem, and were thought worthy of all acceptation.

2. Without this we cannot draw nigh to God in any other Religious duties. *James* 4. 8. *Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you*; but how shall we be made partakers of this incomparable priviledge? the former words direct us, *cleanse your hands you sinners, and purifie your hearts you double-minded.* Isaiah 1. 16. *wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; come now let us reason together, saith the Lord*; there is no coming unto God, except we be first wash'd and made clean, *Heb.* 9. 13. *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself up without spot unto God, cleanse your consciences from dead works, that you serve the living God?* you cannot serve the everliving God in an acceptable manner, unless your consciences be clensed from dead works, and this can onely be done by the blood of Jesus Christ, *who through the eternal spirit offered himself up without spot unto God.*

3. We

3. We ſhould therefore labour for purity of heart, becauſe without this we can have no true peace; peace and purity go together. When God appears in his Majeſty and Glory, when he ariſeth terribly to ſhake the earth, and magnifies his excellent power, working wonders amongſt the children of men, this is the priviledge of thoſe which are pure in heart, that they ſhall remain undaunted, becauſe conſcience will ſpeak peace to them. *Job* 11. 14, 15. *If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away, and let not wickedneſs dwell in thy Tabernacles; for then ſhalt thou lift up thy face without ſpot; yea, thou ſhalt be ſtedfaſt, and ſhalt not fear.* So *Pſal.* 51. 7, 8. ſaith *David*, *purge me with Hyſop, and I ſhall be clean; waſh me and I ſhall be whiter then ſnow; make me to hear joy and gladneſs, that the bones which thou haſt broken may rejoyce*; as if he had ſaid, Lord, I have defiled my ſelf by this bloody ſin which I have committed, and becauſe of my defilement, joy and gladneſs hath been baniſhed from my ſpirit; but do thou waſh me, purge me clean, and then the joy of thy ſalvation will be reſtored, peace will return again. Many they complain for want of comfort, for want of peace; let them conſider whither there be not ſome ſin or other that they harbour with allowance; for beleive it, one ſin will fill the heart with bitterneſs, vexation, and galling perplexity. Sin is a *Jonah* that raiſeth ſtorms and tempeſts where ever it comes.

Fourthly, We ſhould labour for purity, becauſe without this there can be no ſcriptural wel grounded hope of getting to heaven. *David* ſaith, Pſal.

24. 3, 4. *Who ſhall aſcend into the Hill of the Lord? who ſhall ſtand in his holy place? hee that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, who hath not lift up his ſoul unto vanity.* Thoſe that live after the fleſh, wallowing in all impurity, 'tis ſtrange, that they ſhould cheat themſelves with ſuch confident expectation of future bleſſedneſs; The new *Jeruſalem* is, *Civitas Sancta, glorioſa, tota ex auro, tota gemmis et margaritis decorata,* (as *Zanchy* ſpeaks) Conſider that magnificent deſcription of this City, which is laid down in the *Revelation*, and then judge whether Goats and Swine are fit to be admitted to be its Inhabitants: A bare profeſſion may give you admiſſion into the Church Militant; but it is nothing but Scriptural holineſs, and real purity that can give you admiſſion into the Church Triumphant; as for profane perſons, however they may flatter themſelves with vain hopes, yet while they continue in ſin, every leaſe almoſt in the Bible, ſtands as a flaming ſword to keep them out of Paradiſe.

Fifthly, We ſhould labour after purity of heart, becauſe without this, there can be no perſeverance. Thoſe whoſe Religion ſtands only in a gliſtering ſhew of outward profeſſion, though they may ſeem ſtedfaſt and flouriſhing for a while, yet they will certainly fall away in an hour of temptation: What is the reaſon that ſo many have begun in the ſpirit, and ended in the fleſh; ſo many with the Church of *Epheſus* have forſaken their firſt love? It is becauſe their hearts were rotten, and corrupt from the beginning; perhaps their heads were enriched with choice notions, curious ſpeculations, and the like; but ſtill they were ſtrangers to purity of heart, they looked

looked upon Religion as that which could only afford matter of discourse, or did consist in disputing for opinions.

Sixthly, We should labour for purity of heart, that so we may plentifully taste the goodness of God in all conditions; that is a very remarkable place, in *Psal.* 73. 1. *Truely God is good to Israel, even to them that are of a clean heart*; Whatsoever Changes, Vicissitudes, and Revolutions, there may be in the world, yet the pure in heart shall experience the mercy and goodness of God.

In the last place, We should labour to get purity of heart, because the very life of Christianity doth consist in this. In 1 *Peter* 3. 21. *Baptisme also now saveth, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.)* We must consider whether grace have enabled us to answer those solemn engagements, which our baptismal Covenant laid upon us; it is inward washingwhich doth principally denominate a Christian. Thus much for the reasons and motives, stirring up to labour after purity of heart.

But in the third place, What must we do to get our hearts purified?

First, Labour to be heavenly-minded; you may observe, the nearer things are to heaven, the more pure they are. Water is more pure than the earth, as being higher in its situation; Air is more pure then water, and the Fire is more pure than the Air, because it is neareſt to the heavenly bodies. If thy heart were turned and taken off from the world, if it were more raised to converse with heaven, and things of an heavenly nature, this would mightily encrease the purity of it. Secondly,

Secondly, Attend upon the word, *John* 15. 3. *Now you are clean*, ſaith Chriſt to his Diſciples, *through the word that I have ſpoken unto you.* So *Pſal.* 119. 9. *Wherewith ſhall a young man cleanſe his way? by taking heed according to thy word.*

And then get the ſpirit of grace to dwell in thy heart; that is the moſt effectual way to have the heart purified; the ſpirit is ſometimes compared to water for its purifying nature, *John* 3. 5. *Except a man be born again; of water and the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*; by water here is not meant the Element of water made uſe of in baptiſme; none can conclude baptiſmal Regeneration from ſuch a place of Scripture as this; no, but except a man be born of water and the ſpirit, that is, of the ſpirit that reſembles water, compared to water for its cleanſing vertue and efficacy; ſo likewiſe the Spirit is compared to fire, *Mat.* 3. 11. *John* ſpeaking concerning Chriſt, *One cometh after me, greater then I, whoſe Shoe Latchets I am not worthy to unlooſe, he ſhall baptiſe you with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire*; that is, with the Holy Ghoſt, that doth reſemble fire, ſo called from its refining vertue.

In the fourth place I proceed to ſhew wherein this purity of heart doth diſcover it ſelf.

It diſcovers it ſelf chiefly in theſe four things, an underſtanding free from error, in purity of Works, in purity of Words, and in purity of Worſhip.

First, An underſtanding free from error; thoſe that have a pure heart they will ſtrive againſt Errors in Doctrine, as well as Errors in Practice; for if the head be once poyſoned, the venemous influences of it will quickly diſtend to the heart, infecting

the very vitals of Christianity; corrupt opinions, and corrupt practices commonly go together; they that have purity of heart, will be filled with a love to truth.

Secondly, Purity of heart discovers it self in purity of works; if there be a conformity to the Image of God in the heart, there will also be a conformity to the Law of God in the outward conversation; you may as well suppose the Sun to be without light, the fire without heat, and honey without sweetness, as that saving grace should be rooted in the heart, and not bring forth the fruits of holiness in the life, *Mat.* 5. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven*; therefore those do miserably cheat their own souls, which boast as if their hearts were good, though they live in the dayly practice of gross and scandalous sins; a pure fountain would never send forth muddy streams, a good tree would never bring forth corrupt fruit; if filthiness appear in the outward behaviour, you may certainly conclude that there is much more impurity in the inward parts.

Thirdly, Purity of heart sheweth it self in purity of words, *James* 1. 26. If any man among you seem to be Religious, and bridle not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this mans Religion is vain. How can the heart be chast, when the words are loose and immodest? how can the heart be humble, when the speech is swelling and lofty? how can the heart be heavenly, when the discourse constantly runs out, and spends it self upon the things of the World? the words are still suitable to

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that treasure which is laid up in the heart, *Mat.* 12. 35. *A good man out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.*

Fourthly, They that are endued with purity of heart, labour for purity of worship; they are Enemies to Will-worship, they cannot endure to serve God in any way save that which he has appointed; they would not have the gold of the Sanctuary mingled with the dross of humane invention; tis the corruption and uncleanness of mens spirits, which makes them so violently contend for, and obstinately addicted to the observation of Idolatrous customes.

HEB.

HEB. 2. 3.

How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation.

THE Apoſtle had told us, in the foregoing verſe, *that if the word which was ſpoken by the Angels*, that is, the Law which was publiſhed upon *Mount Sinai*, by the ſubordinate adminiſtration of Angels: If that Word, the Law, were ſo ſtedfaſt; if it obtained full authority, *ſo that every tranſgreſſion, every diſobedience againſt it, received a juſt recompence of reward*; If men were ſeverely puniſhed for tranſgreſſing the Law of *Moſes*; how much more ſhall we be ſeverely puniſhed, if we ſin againſt the glorious Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt! *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation.*

I would willingly ſpend the ſhort time allotted for the preſent exerciſe, in that diſcourſe which might moſt conduce to general edification: And therefore I ſhall without further delay preſent to you this doctrinal point of Obſervation, from the words to be inſiſted upon, Namely,

Doct. *That thoſe which go on in the final neglect of that Salvation which is offered and held forth in the Goſpel, they muſt unavoidably periſh.*

In the Handling of the point I ſhall propoſe this enſuing method.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew what this ſalvation is.

Secondly, Why it is called a great Salvation.

Thirdly, How many wayes men are guilty of neglecting this great Salvation.

Fourthly, What are the cauſes from whence the general neglect of this *great Salvation* may proceed.

Fifthly, I ſhall wind up all in ſome uſefull application.

Firſt, What this *Salvation* is.

The word σωτηρία, properly ſignifies the preſervation of any thing or Perſon in a ſtate of ſafety. But in the Scripture it is taken divers ways.

Firſt, It is taken for a Deliverance from ſome temporal danger or calaminity. Thus you have it in *Exodus* 14. 13. When the *Iſraelites* were encompaſſed with an Army of *Egyptians* at their backs, and the Red Sea was before them, and that the murmuring of the people might be ſatisfied, *Moſes* ſtands up, and bids them *ſtand ſtill and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord*; as if he had ſaid, Let not your hearts be troubled, let not your ſpirits ſink under a load of diſcouraging fears, do not fall into the hands of unbeliefe; for that is worſe than if you ſhould fall into the hands of your enemies; but have a ſtedfaſt eye unto the God of *Iſrael*, and ſo take notice

notice what a ſeaſonable and ſpeedy deliverance he will work for you.

Secondly, Salvation is taken for the providential care and power of God, whereby he will not let his people want thoſe things that are needfull. Thus you have it, *Pſal.* 78. 22. When the Iſraelites murmured againſt God in the Wilderneſs for want of food, why ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *They truſted not in his ſalvation, they believed not in God, and truſted not in his ſalvation*; that is, They truſted not in that wonderful providence of God which would certainly make a proviſion for them in their wants and difficulties, had they but patience to wait for it.

Thirdly, Salvation is taken in ſcripture for the Author of ſalvation, *Pſal.* 27. 1. *The Lord is my light and my ſalvation; whom ſhall I fear?* ſo in *Luke* 2. 30. they are the words of *Simeon*, *Now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace*, verſe 30. *for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation*, that is, I have beheld him that ſhall be the Author of ſalvation both to the Jews and to the Gentiles.

Fourthly, Salvation is taken for that ſtate of Glory and perfect Bleſſedneſs which the ſoules of Gods people ſhall enter upon immediately after the diſſolution of their bodies.

Thus you have it in *Heb.* 1. 14. ſpeaking there concerning the Angels, *Are they not all miniſtring ſpirits ſent forth that they may miniſter for thoſe which ſhall be the heirs of ſalvation?* the *heirs of ſalvation*, that is, the heirs of future Glory.

And Laſtly, Salvation is ſometimes Metonymically taken for the doctrine of the Goſpel, becauſe that is the only way which God hath ordinarily ap-

pointed for the ſalvation of his rational creatures.

And thus it is taken in the words of the Text, *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation!*

I have finiſhed the firſt Branch, and proceed to the ſecond, to enquire why this is here called a *great Salvation.*

And Firſt, It is ſo called becauſe it doth concern our ſoules.

Oh! that men were more deeply ſenſible of the incomparable excellency and precioufneſs that is in their ſoules! Why, Pleaſure is a Dream, Honour is a ſmoak, Wealth is a deceitful ſhadow; Our ſoules are the onely jewels, that are worth the preſerving. If theſe be ſaved, no matter what is loſt; and if theſe be loſt, no matter what is ſaved.

Alas! What would all the preferments the world can give, avail us if after the enjoyment of all, our ſouls ſhould be ſwallowed up in a gulf of remedileſs torment? I tell you, and there is ground for it in the word of God, that the loathſome toad and the venemous ſnake, they are in a better condition than the higheſt unſanctified Monarch upon the earth who ſhall be condemned to have his portion in this preſent life. If you highly eſteem thoſe things or perſons which may be inſtrumental for the ſaving of your eſtates, or to ſave the life of your bodies; are you not infinitely much more engaged to ſet an high eſteem upon the Goſpel which God hath appointed to be the only inſtrument for the ſaving of your ſouls? Why, our time is here ſpent to very little purpoſe, unleſſe we do induſtriouſly promote the ſalvation of our ſouls. We live here in vain unleſs that ſhort time which is allotted for us to continue here upon

upon the earth, be wiſely improved to prepare us for an everlaſting enjoyment of God in heaven; it had been better for us that our bodies had never lived the life of nature, unleſs a life of grace here, diſpoſe our ſoules for a life of Glory hereafter.

Thoſe which lay out all their care to cheriſh frail periſhing bodies, and in the mean time neglect their ſoules, they goe the ready way to plunge both body and ſoul in everlaſting ruine. For oh ſinner, doſt thon not know, that at the Reſurrection thy body ſhall be in the ſame condition with thy ſoul? when they are reunited together, they muſt be both companions in joy, or companions in torment.

But, when the care which we lay out upon our bodies, is nothing, if compared with the care which we lay out upon our ſoules, we go the ready way to ſave both, to make both eternally happy; that is the firſt reaſon, it is called a great ſalvation becauſe it concerns our ſoules.

Secondly, That ſalvation which the Goſpel brings, is therefore called a great ſalvation, becauſe it is often beſtowed upon the greateſt Sinners. There is no perſon ſo deeply defiled with the pollutions of the world, or grown ſo black with the guilt of high and hainous ſins, but that the Goſpel can furniſh him with a robe of imputed Righteouſneſs large enough to cover all his ſpots, and ſtains, to conceal all his ſhame and nakedneſs in the preſence of God.

No perſon hath ſo much run upon the ſcore of divine juſtice, but the Goſpel can bring him acquainted with a Surety which is able to diſcharge his debt, and pay the utmoſt farthing. Never yet

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did any ſinner come to Chriſt, and Chriſt refuſed to ſave him, meerly upon this account becauſe his ſins were too great to be pardoned; there never was any had occaſion for ſuch a complaint; No, the greateſt ſinner in this congregation may be encouraged; Thoſe which for many years together have continued ſlaves to the Prince of darkneſs, thoſe which have ſpent the flower of their age, in the ſervice of ſin, and making proviſion for their luſts, thoſe that have trifled away their time, that have abuſed the patience of God, that have trampled under foot the riches of his goodneſs, that have reſiſted the work of grace, and grieved the Spirit, why yet if they will accept Chriſt, and come up to the terms of the Goſpel, they ſhall not miſs of a full ſalvation.

Thirdly, This is called a very great ſalvation in regard of the great price which was laid down to procure it. God ſcornes to ſell ſalvation to any creature; it is therefore freely offered unto us; we may have it without money, and without price; Oh! but it coſt Chriſt full dear; it coſt him no leſs than the ſhedding of his own *precious Blood*, the leaſt drop of which was more worth than the whole frame of this material world; if all the mountains had been turned into gold, and every blade of graſs on the face of the earth, had been changed into a precious jewel, and all this laid together had been offered up to procure the ſalvation of but one ſingle perſon, yet it would not have been accepted.

Fourthly, This is a very *great ſalvation* if we conſider thoſe great benefits that are comprehended in it; why, this ſalvation, it doth comprehend *Adoption*, *Juſtification*, and *Eternall life*. The benefits are exceeding

ceeding great; though men are naturally born veſſels of wrath, and fire-bands of hell; why yet the Goſpel ſhews them how they may get into a ſtate of *peace and reconciliation with God.*

The Goſpel ſhews them how they may have their ſins forgotten and forgiven; how they may have their perſons juſtified, and their natures ſanctified, that they may be made meet to be partakers of an inheritance with the ſaints in light.

Fifthly, This is called a *great ſalvation* becauſe it brings a great revenue of Glory to the excellent Name of God: God is more glorified in that ſalvation which is extended to ſinners in the Goſpel, than by any thing elſe; why, here in this Salvation the riches of his wiſdome are diſcovered, his juſtice is ſatisfied, his grace and love are exalted, his mercy ſparkles forth to the greateſt advantage.

And then in the ſixth place, It is a *great ſalvation* if we conſider its everlaſting nature. Thoſe that are once effectually called, and juſtified, though they may fall under the merit of condemnation, yet they ſhall never be brought into a ſtate of condemnation; they that are once the children of God, ſhall ſo remain for ever; *for the gifts of God are unchangable*; they ſhall ſure enough *be kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto ſalvation.* They that are once made partakers of this *Salvation*, though they may be encompaſſed with trouble, why yet their graces are ſafe, their comforts are ſafe; Chriſt, their head, their hope, and all is ſafe. This is the ſalvation concerning our ſoules, being beſtowed upon the greateſt ſinners, having a great price laid down to purchaſe it, comprehending great bene-

fits,

fits, bringing great glory to the name of God, and being of an everlasting nature, justly called a very great Salvation.

I hane finished the second thing proposed, and come to the third, inquiring how many ways persons may be guilty of neglecting this great Salvation.

And first, men are guily of neglecting this great Salvation when they will not obey the Gospel; whosoever lives in the practice of any known sin, in a state of open rebellion against God, presuming to out-face the Sun of Gospel light, (Oh that God would powerfully speak to his heart, and effectually convince him of it!) this person is guilty of neglecting this great Salvation. Why sirs, why doth the great God of Heaven speak to poor wormes here upon the earth, unless it be that they should obey him? and how can persons more evidently discover that they despise the Gospel of Christ, then when they will not give up themselves to be ruled and governed by it? when they will not suffer it to have any transforming or reforming efficacy upon their hearts, & when they peremptorily refuse to live up to the purity of a Gospel conversation; but though the word be never so much Preached, yet they still wallow in their filthines; the Swearer, the Sabbath-breaker, the Perfidious person, the Scorner at an holy life, will still be the same, say the Preacher what he will. If Gospel Ministers call upon the Drunkard to be sober, and watch least he be drowned in the next intemperate cup of Wine, and he be snatcht away by death in the midst of his sin, as many others have been in the like condition, before him: why

yet

yet he will not be prevailed upon, to break off his revelling courſes. Though Miniſters would fain perſwade the covetous wretch to ſeek after the Kingdome of God, and to lay up treaſure in Heaven, and to look after an inheritance of a better nature then the World can give, why yet he ſtill remaines a ſlave to unrighteous *Mammon*, he ſtill continues rooting like a Swine in the earth. Though they call upon the laſcivious perſon to put on the Ornaments of chaſtity, and to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctification and honour; why yet when they have ſpoken all that can be ſpoken, the Whore muſt ſtill be followed, and Chriſt be rejected. Alas! Friends, meer nominal Chriſtians, by their wicked converſation they are a perpetual reproach to the name of Chriſt. *Cyprian* brings the Heathens in his days, thus upbraiding the Chriſtians; *Quare in ore ſemper evangelium, evangelium, cum tua vita ab evangelii præceptis diſcrepat?*

Why is the Goſpel ſo much in their lips, when there is nothing of Goſpel purity that appears in their lives? Why? you may be ſure that Miniſters were not ſent that they ſhould be as muſical Inſtruments to gratifie the ears of the people with pleaſant ſounds, nor to feed the wanton curioſity of nice critical hearers with choyce refined notions; Chriſt did not ſend his Goſpel that it ſhould onely furniſh men with matter of diſcourſe and empty ſpeculations; No, but the holy Apoſtle tells you why the Goſpel was ſent, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. *The grace of God that bringeth ſalvation, hath appeared to all men*; to what end? why, *Teaching us, that denying*

denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Secondly, men are guilty of neglecting this great salvation, when they will not lay to heart the things of the Gospel; when they count it a burthen to be engaged in meditating upon them, when they will not consider nor allow the Gospel any room in their serious thoughts, but rather do what they can to banish and cast it out of their minds; how can you more evidently discover that you despise a thing, then when you do not judge it worth the thinking upon?

Oh! how many are there, that melt themselves into luxury, and wantonness, rusling it out into pride and bravery, and wasting their precious time? yet they never took any successful care for their immortall partial souls; they never set apart one hour seriously to consider how they might provide for their everlasting state.

Alas! what will become of those men? do they not think, that they shall taste of Death as well as others? and then how can they look their Judge in the face? I beseech you sinners, take notice of the indispensible necessity that lies upon you to practice the duty of consideration. Is Christ before you, is grace and a crown of glory before you, and will

will you not conſider? why is Death ready to ſeize upon you, is the judge at the door, and yet will ye not conſider? why, have you any better things to conſider upon then the Goſpel doth affard? what is not a God and a Chriſt, is not the ſtate of your ſouls worth the conſidering upon? why, Crowns, and Kingdoms, Lands, and Lordſhips, they are but toys and trifles, but chaff and ſtubble, droſs and dung, if compared with thoſe everlaſting things; and yet will you not be perſwaded to conſider? Alas! doth not Conſcience tell you that you can entertain wanton, and covetous, and revengeful thoughts from morning until night, and that is no wearisomeneſs to your ſpirits; and have you no leiſure, no time to think how you may make your peace with God, and procure the pardon of your ſins? That is the ſecond; Men are guilty of neglecting this great Salvation, when they will not meditate upon the Goſpel.

Thirdly, Men are guilty of neglecting this great Salvation, when they will not put forth their ſtrength to work out their own Salvation; when they reſolve to be at no further coſt for the ſaving of their ſouls, then the laying out of a few cold cuſtomary deſires, and ſluggiſh wiſhes; why, conſider what work you have to do, if ever you will enter into life; you have a dark underſtanding to be enlightned, an hard heart to be ſoftned, a ſtubborn will to be ſubdued, defiled affections that muſt be cleanſed, ſtrong corruptions that muſt be mortified, violent temptations that muſt be reſiſted, and can

all this be done, while you sleep in the bosome of brutish security, and slothful negligence? why, doth not the Scripture tell you that if you will be saved, *you must strive to enter in at the straight gate: for many shall seek to enter and shall not be able*; you must *wrestle with Principalities and Powers, so run that you may obtain, and fight the good fight of faith, that you may lay hold upon eternal life*; and do such expressions as these, give the least encouragement to sloath. Oh! that men should take more paines to get a morsel of bread, then they do to get an immortal Kingdom of glory! that they should go to bed late, *and rise early, and eat the bread of carefulness*, as if they never could take too much paine for the getting of earthly riches! yet think every hour too much that is spent for the things of eternity; those which will not put forth their strength in working out Salvation, they are guilty of neglecting it.

But in the fourth place, what are the causes from whence the general neglect of this salvation may proceed.

Why, first ignorance, many are so ignorant, as that they do not understand the common termes of Christianity; though Ministers do cloath their matter in the plainest and most familiar expressions, yet they hear all as if the discourse were delivered in an unknown language.

Secondly,

Secondly, another cauſe is unbelief, *why men neglect this great Salvation*; though they have a competent meaſure of knowledge, yet they do not believe the Goſpel of Chriſt to be true, they dont heartily believe that tis the word of God, though perhaps with their tongues they may profeſs to believe as well as others, leaſt they ſhould be ſhamed by the company with whom they converſe yet in their hearts they have no ſtedfaſt perſwaſion concerning the truth of theſe things; if there were not ſo much unbeleif, men would be a great deal more diligent in working out their Salvation.

Multorum fides natat in labris, dum nulla eſt in corde, aut vehementer languet; (as ſaith *Cyprian*) many profeſs to have faith, when nothing but the works of infidelity appear in their lives.

Thirdly, Hardneſs of heart, that is another reaſon; men are hard enough by nature; but by cuſtomary continuance in ſin, and by grieving the ſpirit, and by ſlighting the means of grace, they grow harder; ſo that their hearts will not be broken under the threatnings of the Law, nor melted under the promiſes of the Goſpel; A broken heart can no more neglect the Goſpel, than an hungry man can neglect his food.

But Fourthly, The greateſt cauſe of all in the generality of men, is earthly-mindedneſs; they are ſo taken up with the things of the world, that they have no leiſure to think of heaven; their thoughts are

are earthly, their project and endeavours are earthly, their affections earthly; head, heart, hand, and all conspire to carry on those designs, on which their temporal advantages do especially depend. You know in *Mathew* 13. 22. those hearers that are compared to the thorny ground, *they received the word, but the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choaked the word, so that it became unfruitful*; they were never the better for it. If a person goes aside to consider about the matters of his salvation, presently some worldly business or other steps in and interrupteth his thoughts. The young man in *Matthew* 19. was very fair for heaven; yet notwithstanding the world that was a bar to him; for saith the text, *he went away sorrowful, because he had great possessions*; Christ and the world, they are contrary Masters, and they set their servants about a contrary work; therefore none can serve both of these together.

fifth I come to the first and last thing, which is to wind up all in some usefull application.

And first, If those which neglect the salvation of the Gospel, must unavoidably perish: then let all take heed how they do attend and give ear to the preaching of the Gospel.

For first, there is much of God and Christ in the Gospel, there are thousands, amongst the glorified saints and Angels, blessing the Name of God for ever for that which they met withal in the preaching of

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the word; if it were poſſible that ſin ſhould be committed in heaven, that would be greater than ſin here committed upon the earth; therefore the ſin of the fallen Angels was the greater, becauſe committed in a place, where God was pleaſed to make ſpeciall and extraordinary diſcoveries of his preſence; the more of God there is in any thing, the greater is their ſin who abuſe it; there is more of God in the Goſpel, then there is in all the works of the Creation and providence.

Secondly, We ſhould have a care, leaſt we be found guilty of neglecting the Goſpel, becauſe that is the conduit, which God hath appointed to convey the choiceſt bleſſings to the hearts of his people; Thoſe that live under the faithful and powerful diſpenſations of the Goſpel, let them know that they enjoy the greateſt priviledge, which they are capable of receiving in this life. Oh then what ſhall we think of thoſe poor ſoules, which have continued for many years, and are grown gray-headed under the preaching of the Goſpel, and yet are never the better for it! every Sermon hath been like a ſhower of water, falling upon a rock, making no impreſſion at all.

outward

Thirdly, Therefore do not neglect the Goſpel, becauſe it is very quick and lively in its workings; it will quickly bring men into a ſtate of Salvation, or elſe ſinke them deeper into perdition, *Heb.* 4. 12. *the word of God is quick and powerful* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *and ſharper than*

than a two-edged ſword, and pierceth even to the dividing aſunder of the ſoul and ſpirit. Math. 3. 10. *Now the Ax* (ſaith he) *is laid unto the root of the Tree, and every Tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewen down and caſt into the fire; The Ax is laid to the root of the Tree;* When was that? Why, when *John* the *Baptiſt* came preaching repentance, *becauſe the kingdome of God was at hand;* the preaching of the Goſpel was at hand; though the tree was barren before, yet it might ſtand ſtill, and not be cut down; but now when the powerful miniſtration of the word cometh, either cloſe with the Goſpel and be ſaved, or elſe refuſe the Goſpel and periſh, So *Mar.* 16.15,16. *Goe* (ſaith Chriſt) *and preach the Goſpel to every creature. He that beleeveth, and is baptized ſhall be ſaved; and he that beleeveth not ſhal be damned.*

Fourthly, therefore we ſhould not neglect the Goſpel, becauſe it is that by which we muſt be judged at the laſt day. Heathens that never heard of Chriſt, they ſhall not be puniſhed for not beleiving in him; for obligation unto duty doth neceſſarily preſuppoſe the promulgation of a Law; but as for thoſe that have lived under the Goſpel, without controverſie they ſhall be judged according to the Goſpel; what would many a perſon give to know how it ſhall ſpeed with him in that great and notable day, *when the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a mighty noiſe, and the Elements melt with fervent*

last beat, when all the beauty and bravery of the World, ſhall ſink into a bed of aſhes? what would many a man give to know how he ſhall ſpeed then? why, the Goſpel tells you; thoſe which the Goſpel doth condemn now, they ſhall be condemned then; and they that are acquitted by the Goſpel now, they ſhall be acquitted then.

Fifthly, All that neglect the Goſpel, they are near to a curſe, &c. There is a clear place for it in *Heb.* 6. 7, 8. *The Earth which drinketh in the rain, that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs, meet for them by whom it is dreſſed, receiveth a bleſſing from God, but that which bringeth forth briars and thornes, is rejected, and is nigh unto curſing, whoſe end is to be burned*: the meaning of it is briefly thus, the good ſoyl are thoſe honeſt hearers which receive the word, and bring forth fruit, and receive a bleſſing from God; but that which bears briars and thornes, the bad ground, is thoſe hearers which receive the word, hear as many Sermons as others, yet they bring nothing forth but briars and thornes, repining and murmuring againſt the purity and truth of Goſpel-Ordinances; *theſe are rejected, and are nigh unto curſing.*

Then in the laſt place thoſe that do neglect the Goſpel, it will deeply agravate their condemnation. The *Sodomites* that were conſumed with fire and brimſtone from Heaven, you will ſay they were great ſinners, and yet Chriſt tells us plainly, it will be more tollerable for them at the day of

judgment, then for those that neglect [illegible]
pal[illegible] shall sink into a bed of ashes? [illegible]
Secondly, If it be so dreadful to [illegible]
Gospel; then endeavour to receive the [illegible]
of the Gospel, as Christ hath appointed [illegible]
with meekness that ingrafted word [illegible]
to save your souls [illegible]
three.

1. Receive it with [illegible]
as those which must give an account [illegible]
of Glory for every Sermon [illegible]

2. Receive it with thankfulness [illegible]
for the shining of the Sun, and for the [illegible]
the clouds, and for fruitful seasons; [illegible]
seldome do we break forth into [illegible]
Christ, for the unspeakable benefit of [illegible]
pel[illegible] soul are those honest hearers which [illegible]

3. Receive it with an holy [illegible]
after it; as [illegible]
[illegible] of [illegible]
thereby.
[illegible] the word, hear as many Sermons [illegible]
[illegible] yet they bring nothing forth but briars
[illegible]ornes, repining and murmuring against the
[illegible] and truth of Gospel-Ordinances; *these are*
[illegible] *and are nigh unto cursing.*

[illegible] place those that do neglect the
[illegible], it will deeply aggravate their condemnation.
[illegible] that were consumed with fire and
[illegible]one from Heaven. You will say they were
[illegible]nners, and yet Christ [illegible] us plainly, it
[illegible] more tollerable for them at the day of
judge-